

Which MP3
player lets you
record music and
watch videos?

Phones that can
download and
play MP3 and
iTunes songs

Learn about
portable MP3
players: how to
buy & use



Step-by-step
guide: how to
copy music from
CDs to a player

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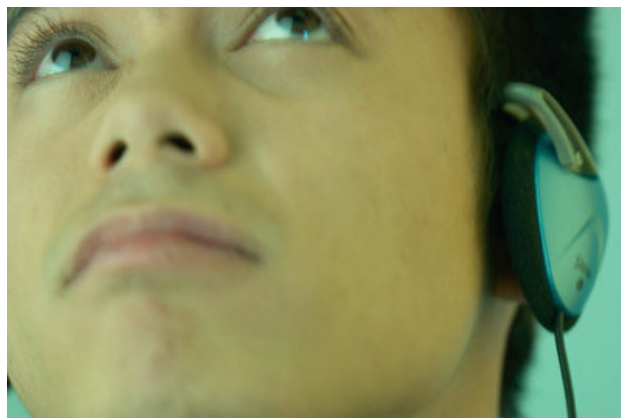
Finding the best MP3 player

So you want an MP3 player, but your friends and favorite magazines are only talking about Apple iPods? Before you rush out to get one for yourself, spare a moment on defining what you expect to do with your player. If you still want to get an iPod after finding out all your options, by all means do so, but in case anyone asks, at least you'll know the choices available.

There are plenty of products available for different budgets. The different types of MP3 players are: products that use flash memory for music storage, players with a hard disk, CD players that can play MP3 music, and other devices, such as phones that can play MP3 music. Here, we'll focus on dedicated MP3 players.

First, let's determine the set of features you want from the player

Are you going to listen to your digital music indoors or outdoors? Listening at home, on a train, or in a car works fine with any player. If you plan to take the player along for outdoor sports activities like jogging or inline skating, it is advisable to get a product that has been designed for sports.



Battery life in most products is sufficient for commuting, exercising, cleaning the house, shopping, or other typical daily activities. Players using rechargeable batteries are more economical in the long run than disposable batteries. Products with hard disks consume more power than flash memory players, so make sure the product you desire has the battery life you need.

MP3 player manufacturers that have previous experience in software design have an advantage in their design for functionality. The Apple iPod has set the benchmark for ease of use that others are trying to follow. This is not to say that it will be difficult to use other players, but always test out different players to see if their menu systems make sense to you. Also, make sure you like the sound - don't expect Hi-Fi, but a decent audio quality.

Avec Mobile

*Guide to
Portable MP3 Players*

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Creative MuVo TX 512MB

Other entry-level products:
Apple iPod Shuffle 512MB
Samsung Yepp YP-T4 256MB
SanDisk MP3 Blue 512MB
Sony NW-305 Walkman Bean



Apple iPod Nano 2GB / 4GB

Other mid-range products:
Archos Gmini XS 200 20GB
iRiver H10 20GB
Creative Zen Micro 5GB/6GB
Sony NW-HD5 20GB



Archos Gmini 402 20GB

Other high-end products:
iPod 20GB, 40GB, or 60GB
Creative Zen Vision 30GB
iAudio X5 20GB, or 30GB
iRiver H320/H340, 20/40GB

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Storage capacity for music is one of the most important factors in an MP3 player, because it largely determines the size, price and character of the device. The storage technologies are flash memory, hard disk, or CD. If you must have a tiny device, a product using flash memory is for you. If storage capacity is the most important factor for you, you should get a hard disk player. As portable devices, MP3 players may get an occasional shock or two. Products using flash memory are the most shock resistant, because there are no moving parts inside.

Second, does the format of digital music make a difference to you?

Make sure that you have software on your computer that can extract and save the music in your preferred format, and that your portable player supports it. Ordinary music listeners who just enjoy the music and don't worry about the technology won't experience any difference between the music formats.

The common digital music formats are MP3 (MPEG-1 audio layer 3), WMA (Windows Media Audio) and AAC (Advanced Audio Coding). All of them are not recognized by all portable players, only MP3 is practically a fool-proof format that all players can play.

Entry level products, priced under 100 EUR / USD

Entry level products use flash memory for storage and they are small in size. Typical players can store between 128MB - 1GB of music. For instance, a player with 512MB of memory stores about eight hours worth of MP3 music.

Mid-range products, 100 - 300 EUR / USD

A diverse selection of products are available in the mid-price range. This price range is particularly interesting because in one and the same category, you can find flash memory products with 1GB - 4GB storage and hard disk players from 4 to 20 GB. It is a huge difference in capacity for the same price.

Why is that? Products built on flash memory are smaller, lighter, silent and less prone to mechanical problems. Although well-protected and reliable, hard disks still have to spin at high speeds when moved around, but their advantage is large storage capacity for a reasonable price.

High-end products, priced over 300 EUR / USD

All high-end products use hard disks for storing the music. The capacity of these products is more than enough for most mortals; for instance, a 20GB iPod can hold up to 5000 songs in its memory. Many of these products can show photos, play movies and store photos directly downloaded from digital cameras.

Quiz: Do you know your digital music lingo?

Have you ever found yourself nodding in agreement during a conversation about the compression ratio of the new Ogg that wasn't as nice as the FLAC on Wippit for the USB compatible iRiver, while all the time thinking, "I have no idea what this means?"

Well, you're not alone, and that's why this quiz will teach you a few terms you can toss around to give the impression you know what you're talking about. Better yet, you'll know LOL from LAME once you have gone through the quiz:

1. An iPod is...

- A. An individual sleep-space in airports that you can rent by the hour.
- B. An optician who utilizes the Internet to treat and manage patients.
- C. Apple's "on-the-go" personal mini-jukebox that can play digital music.
- D. An online community whose sole purpose is sharing music found on the Internet.

2. A MIDI is...

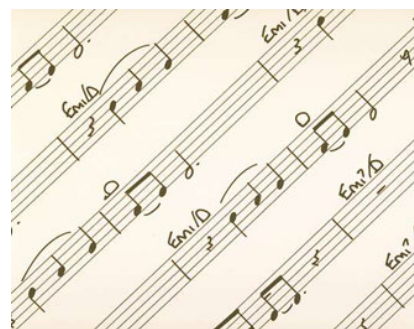
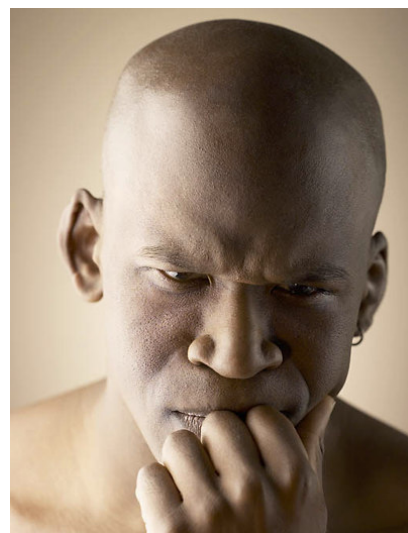
- A. A music format that can only be played at low to mid-volumes.
- B. An abbreviation that stands for My Individual Digital Information.
- C. An abbreviation that stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface.
- D. A slang term used to describe a tune that's Middle-of-the-road muzak.

3. When someone tells you they went to Wippit over the weekend, where did they go?

- A. A rave-style party where everyone brings their own digital music.
- B. A website where you can download MP3 music.
- C. A ski resort in the Rocky Mountains for snowboarders only.
- D. A website that umm... how should we say... is in poor taste.

4. Which of the following is not a method of digital music compression?

- A. AAC
- B. MP3
- C. OGG
- D. LOL



5. When talking about digital music, LAME refers to...

- A. A bad track: "that's a lame track."
- B. A Large Annoying Media Expert.
- C. A piece of software that encodes music into MP3 format.
- D. A lost music file.

6. When someone is talking about MP3, they are referring to:

- A. Minister number 3 in the parliament.
- B. The most popular digital music format (MPEG audio layer 3).
- C. The new Xbox, coming out in 2008.
- D. Megapixels in three dimensions.

7. If someone tells you they "ripped" a track, what did they do?

- A. Tore up an old CD.
- B. Illegally downloaded a music file from the Internet.
- C. Extracted a song from a CD for use in a portable device or computer.
- D. They composed a new ringtone for their phone.



Quiz by Zach Sorrells

Answers to the digital music quiz

- 1: C** An iPod is one of the hottest digital music players on the market. It is a mini-jukebox from Apple that allows you to carry, play and listen to thousands of songs in the palm of your hand.
- 2: C** MIDI stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface and it is a description of music in a language that synthesizers and computers understand, and use for communicating with one another. You would most often hear MIDI in polyphonic ringtones.
- 3: B** Wippit (www.wippit.com) is a popular website where you can buy and download music - also MP3 - and ringtones.
- 4: D** AAC, MP3, and OGG are music compression techniques that shrink files by removing sounds that are inaudible to the human ear. This makes it viable to store and play music files without eating up large chunks of storage capacity. LOL is geek speak for Laughing Out Loud.
- 5: C** LAME is an MP3 encoding technology utilized by many software products to compress large music files with minimal loss of sound quality.
- 6: B** MP3 is the most popular form of digital music. If you intend to buy digital music and can choose the format, always take MP3, because you can play it on any digital audio player you want.
- 7: C** "Ripping" is the term used to describe the process of pulling audio tracks from a CD to a computer or portable music device in a compressed format, usually as an MP3.

How to get free music for your MP3 player

Extracting music from CDs is a fast and easy way to build your digital music library. Copying music from CDs leaves you with the original material as a backup in case any unfortunate incident wipes out your digital music collection from the computer. You can also be rest assured that upgrading to a new computer or to a new portable player won't make your digital music library obsolete, because you'll be storing the music in unlocked, universal MP3 format that's recognized by practically all digital music devices and software.

When you want to complement your music collection with downloads from online music shops, remember that their copy-protection schemes allow you to copy purchased songs to a limited number of computers and MP3 players only. In the future, when you upgrade your computer, change hard disks, get a new portable player, or want to listen to the songs through a car stereo, you have to live with the limited number of copies. We'll be using MP3 music format in this guide, because it doesn't have any such limitations.

The following equipment is needed to extract songs from music CDs and for downloading them to your MP3 player:

- ◆ An MP3 player: you can have an iPod, Creative Zen or MuVo, iRiver, Archos, Cowon iAudio, or any player that recognizes MP3 music. Practically all digital music players can play MP3 as well as one or two other formats, like AAC, WMA, or Ogg.

- ◆ A computer with a CD or DVD drive.

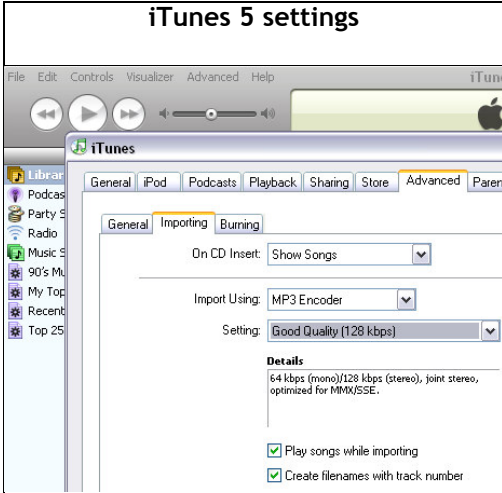
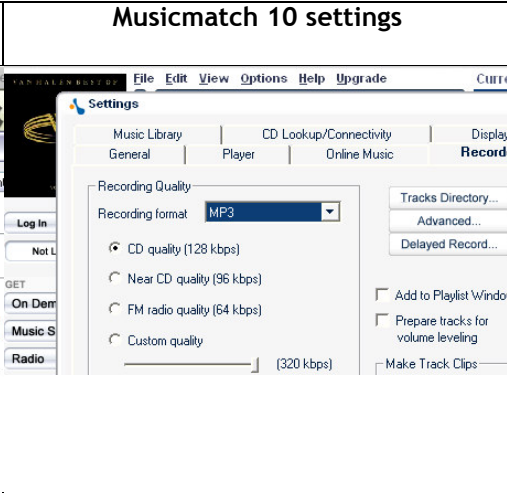
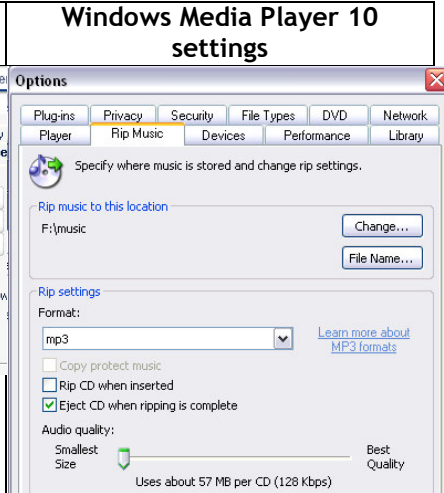
- ◆ An MP3 player/recorder software on your computer. This software will be used for copying music from CDs, downloading tunes to the portable player and managing your whole digital music collection. If you are not yet using any music player software on your computer, you may choose to install, for example, one of these free and popular products: iTunes (from www.apple.com), Windows Media Player (from www.microsoft.com), or MusicMatch (from www.musicmatch.com). MusicMatch and Windows Media Player products run on Windows computers only, while iTunes runs on Mac as well. Windows users already have a version of the Media Player on their computers, but we recommend upgrading to version 10 (or version 9 on older computers), because of its improved sync capability with mobile devices.

- ◆ Your music CDs.



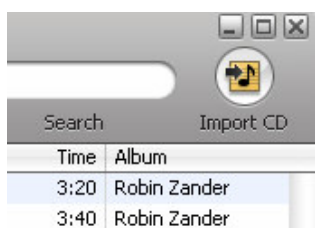
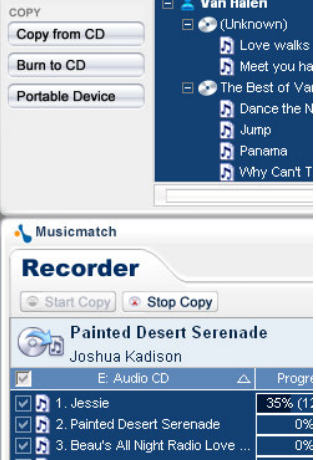
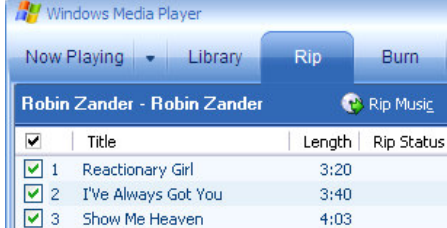
Copying music from a CD to a computer

1. Launch the music player/library software on your computer. We'll refer to iTunes 5, Musicmatch 10 and Windows Media Player 10 running on Windows PC in this guide.
2. Let's make sure that the settings for recording and organizing your music library are the way they should be:
 - Audio quality: Set the quality to 128 Kbps, or higher if you have sharp ears and plenty of disk space.
 - Music format: Choose MP3.
 - Location of your music library on the computer: for example, you could create your music library on a dedicated hard disk F: or in a folder C:\Music that you may want to share for your home network.
 - File name information: your music library may grow with time, and for future reference, you should save at least the Artist and Song in the file name.
 - CD drive: If the music software doesn't find your CD drive, you must specify the drive letter.

iTunes 5 settings	Musicmatch 10 settings	Windows Media Player 10 settings
		
<p>1. Click 'Edit' and 'Preferences' on the menu at the top. Click 'Advanced' tab and 'Importing' tab. Select 'Good quality 128Kbps' from the 'Setting' list.</p> <p>2. Select 'MP3 Encoder' from the 'Import using' list.</p> <p>3. Click the 'General' tab and 'Change' button. Choose a new folder if you want to place your library in another folder.</p>	<p>1. Click 'Options' and 'Settings' on the top menu. Click the 'Recorder' tab. Choose 'CD quality 128Kbps'.</p> <p>2. Select 'MP3' from the 'Recording format' list.</p> <p>3. Click 'Tracks Directory' button. Click the button with three dots and select the new folder or disk.</p> <p>4. Ensure that Artist and Track Name are checked in the 'Name Track File' box.</p> <p>5. Go back to the 'Recorder' tab and select your CD/DVD drive from the 'Recording source' list.</p>	<p>1. Click the small down arrow (Access Application Menus) on the menu at the top. When a menu opens up, click 'Tools' and 'Options'. Click the 'Rip Music' tab. Set the slider to 128 Kbps.</p> <p>2. Select 'MP3' from the 'Format' drop down list.</p> <p>3. Click 'Change'. If you like, choose another hard disk or folder.</p> <p>4. Click 'File name'. Check the necessary boxes.</p> <p>5. Click the 'Devices' tab. Click 'Add' if the CD or DVD drive is not listed.</p>

3. Insert a music CD into the disc drive in your computer. Tip: if you happen to have copy-protected music CD and the CD drive won't read it, try inserting the CD into a DVD drive and reading it from there (just make sure that you are not breaking any local regulations before copying it).

4. Now you can begin to record songs from the CD to the computer's hard disk. When the CD was inserted into the disc drive, the music player software already read some information from the CD and tried to match it with an online catalog of song titles (if you had your Internet connection on). Make sure the titles match the songs on the CD, because from now on, they'll be your only reference to the growing music library you manage on your computer and on your portable player. We recommend that you type in the titles if the software couldn't find them for you.

iTunes	Musicmatch	Windows Media Player
		
The songs on the CD are listed in the main window. Check the titles you want to copy. Click 'Import CD' icon on the upper right corner of the iTunes window.	Click 'Copy from CD' on the left hand side and the Recorder window opens up. Check the songs you want to record and push 'Start Copy' button.	Click 'Rip' on the menu bar on the top. Check the titles you want to copy and click the 'Rip Music' link that's located just above the song titles.

5. You're now finished with the first phase of the project. Open your new music library and check that the new songs are listed in there.

iTunes	Musicmatch	Windows Media Player
click 'Library' on the leftmost column.	click 'Library' button on the left.	click 'Library' tab on the top.

For copying additional CDs, repeat steps from 2 to 4 and keep an eye on your hard disk that it doesn't run out of space.

Moving songs from the computer to the MP3 player

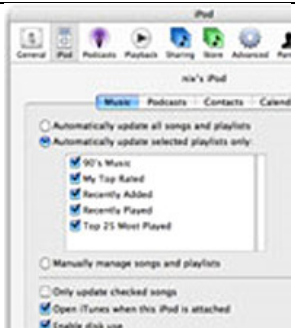
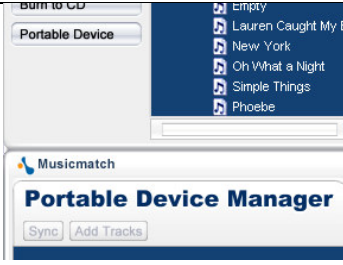

Before we start copying songs from your computer to your portable device, make sure that you have your MP3 player and the cable between the computer and the device at hand. USB cable is the most common technology for connecting devices to computers, and the small flat-shaped port is easy to spot on the side of any modern computer. The download process tends to drain the MP3 player's battery and connecting your charger during the operation is recommended.

There are two alternative methods for copying songs from your computer's music library to the MP3 player: you can let the music library software automatically sync tunes with your MP3 player, or you can manually copy tunes from the computer by dragging and dropping them to the device.

The sync method is handy if you have a high-capacity MP3 player that can hold your whole music library, or the library software can be customized to fill up your device's memory space with the right number of songs.

Sync

1. Open your music library software (iTunes, Musicmatch, or Windows Media Player) on the computer.
2. Connect the supplied (usually USB) cable from your MP3 player to the computer. Turn on the device and wait a few seconds for Windows to connect to the device.
3. The music player software on the computer should automatically recognize your device, but you may have to initiate the task.

iTunes	Musicmatch	Windows Media Player
		
<p>You must have an Apple iPod, or a phone that comes with the same software as iPod (like Motorola ROKR), because iTunes won't work with any other software. iTunes automatically recognizes any connected iPod device. You can check the status by choosing 'Edit' and 'Preferences' on the main menu and clicking the 'iPod' tab.</p>	<p>Push the 'Portable Device' button on the left. Portable Device Manager window will open up and tries to identify your MP3 player. Musicmatch sync function, however, is very simple and we don't recommend using it for large MP3 collections.</p>	<p>Click 'Sync' tab on the main menu. The software tries to automatically recognize your MP3 player. Follow the instructions in the Device Setup wizard.</p>

4. Define the way your MP3 player and music library sync. Although it would be nice to take the whole music library along on the MP3 player, not all devices have enough memory for it. Depending on the size of your music collection, you might need an MP3 player with 5GB, or higher memory capacity if you want to copy everything to the device. When it's not possible to download all songs, the best way is to create playlists on the computer and sync only songs that you have assigned to those playlists.

iTunes	Musimatch	Windows Media Player
Click 'Edit', 'Preferences' and choose 'iPod' tab. You can change the space reserved for music on your iPod by moving the slider on the computer screen. The Autofill form lets you define if you want to fill your iPod with songs on the playlists or dump your whole Library into the iPod.	Click 'Sync' button in the Portable Device Manager window. Choose 'Automated process of copying tracks' and check 'Allow deletion of music' if your device has less than 1GB of memory capacity. Check 'Musimatch Library Tracks' and confirm if you want to automate the sync process every time you connect the device to the computer.	Click 'Sync' tab on the menu bar and push 'Set up sync' button. You can choose to sync all playlists automatically, or pick and choose which songs you want to sync from the displayed list.

5. If this is the first time you sync your MP3 device, it may take a few moments for the software to download everything on to the device. When the sync finishes, don't just remove the cable from the computer. To protect the file system in the device, always use the 'Safely remove hardware' function you can find on the Windows Task bar. Stop the mass storage device that refers to your MP3 device and then disconnect the cable.

More how-to guides for MP3 players, phones, digital cameras, GPS devices and software at <http://www.avecmobile.com>.



As an alternative method and for full control over your media files, you can use the Windows Explorer software to manage your MP3 player

If you want greater control over the download operation, or your portable device can play video, podcasts, or other media that the music library software doesn't necessarily recognize, you should use the manual drag-and-drop method for copying. We'll be using the Windows Explorer file management software for the task.

A word of warning: this method requires a steady mouse hand and an understanding of what can be done with different types of folders and files.

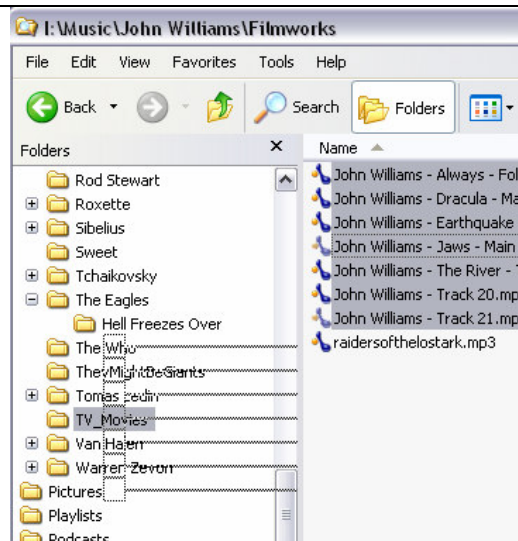
1. Use the cable supplied with your MP3 player and connect the device to the computer.

2. Turn the device on and wait for a few seconds.



If this is the first time you have connected your MP3 player to the computer, Windows will try and find a suitable driver software and configuration for the device. Once that's done, a new window pops up asking what you want to do. Scroll down and select 'Open folder to view files using Windows Explorer' from the list.

3. A new window opens up where you can see the contents of your MP3 device.



You can now manage the files on the MP3 player just as you manage files and folders on your computer. Switch to the folder tree view by clicking the 'Folders' button on the top menu. On the left side of the new window, you can view the folders on your MP3 player. Find the folder that contains music (or video), and then locate the folder on your computer that hosts your music library (or video files). Select the folders or material that you want to copy to your MP3 player and drag-and-drop them to the respective locations on the device.

Podcasts and video clips take a considerable amount of space on an MP3 player, but they maybe listened or watched only once. When you copy new material to the MP3 player, check out podcast folders and remove outdated material from the memory.

The result of all this copying is that you have music stored in three places: on the original audio CD, on the computer's hard disk and on the portable audio player. There's nothing wrong with that - on the contrary, you have created a music library that will stand the test of time.

The original CDs will remain as your back-ups in case something nasty happens to the digital copies. In addition, you'll always be free to copy your whole music library from the current computer to wherever you want (maybe it'll be your new car, new phone, home theater, new computer, or new MP3 player) without having to worry about license activation keys, or restrictions on the number of devices where you can play your music.

More free music: Recording from FM radio and from other audio sources

by Jason Gordon

FM Radio Recording



Many new digital music players come with FM radio functionality and a few of those offer you the ability to record directly from the radio. Not only is this great for listening and capturing the latest hits, you can also use it to record sports games and news programs. Some players even let you schedule your favorite radio programs to record daily or weekly.

All you have to do is tune to the desired station and hit record, or set your player to record on a predefined time using the menu (differs from player to player) and you'll never miss another of your favorite programs.

Examples of players that have this function are the Creative Zen Micro (in the picture), iRiver iFP-790T, Lexar LDP-600, and the Samsung YP-T7X.

Line-in Recording

With this feature, digital music players can capture music from virtually any audio source. All you do is plug the included cord into the audio out port of a device like a home stereo, portable CD player, Walkman, LP Player, television, amplifier, or even guitar. Your player will encode the music in digital format, usually in MP3 (if you can choose, make sure you select the MP3 format). Then, you can access the recorded audio on your playlist and you are no longer confined to only updating from a computer.

Have an LP collection, you can digitize it with your digital music device using the line-in recording feature. Love certain TV themes like the Simpsons or Friends or want to listen to the morning show later in the day? Hook your player into the TV and record whatever you want. Are you a musician? Line-in recording is great for recording yourself playing guitar, or any instrument that hooks into an amplifier with a line-out jack. Examples of players with this function are the Cowon iAudio X5 (in the picture) Creative MuVo Micro and iRiver H320.



Beyond mobile music: Handheld photo viewers and video players

An MP3 player lets you roam with your whole music collection, but what about the rest of your favorite stuff: music videos, movies, photos, or even radio? Earlier, you needed a laptop computer and some technical skills to enjoy them all in one device, but now Portable Media Players like the Creative Zen Vision, Archos Gmini 402 and the iAudio X5 are taking portable digital entertainment way beyond music only.

The Apple iPod is excellent device for listening to music, and even viewing pictures if you have the iPod Photo, but what about watching movies, playing games, or storing backup files for your computer? You could get a portable DVD player, or use a laptop, but those solutions have their size and battery-life limitations. The answer is the Personal Media Player, a device that is highly portable and has the ability to do what your MP3 player can do, and many other useful things, such as:

1. Movie Player and Recorder

Utilizing a compact, but bright and high-contrast LCD screen, Portable Media Players are able to play back movies in many formats, including Divx, MPEG and AVI. Do you have movies stored on your computer? Now you can carry them with you and watch them anytime on your Portable Media Player. Do you hate carrying stacks of DVDs around with you or missing your favorite TV show? Some Personal Media Players allow you to record from TV, DVD, or other video sources so you can always have your favorite movies and shows available to watch.



Examples of players that play digital video are the Archos Gmini 400 and 402, the iRiver PMP-120, and the Creative Zen Vision. Archos AV700 (in the picture) and AV500 lets you record directly from your TV or DVD and store the shows on the device's hard disk.

Read more about portable media players at <http://reviews.avecmobile.com>.

2. Photo Viewer



People who love to take digital photos can store and view their images on a Personal Media Player one by one or in slide show format. If you feel the screen is too small to show all the detail, you simply hook the player up to your TV with a video cable. You can even setup music-accompanied slide shows for your friends and family.

Many Personal Media Players also come with Compact Flash readers or USB port so you can hook your digital camera directly to the player without the need for a computer. Some examples of players with this option are the Archos Gmini 402, Cowon iAudio X5, Creative Zen Vision (in the picture) and the iRiver PMP100.

3. Music Player

Personal Media Players are capable of storing thousands of songs and they can play digital music in a variety of formats, like MP3, WMA and WAV. Many models allow you to record music from audio sources or from FM radio.

4. Games

Many of the new Personal Media Players also come with a selection of games. Unless you opt for the Playstation Portable, the games on Portable Media Players will not be as graphic intensive as games you can play on a computer but are still lots of fun.

5. File Storage

Virtually every Personal Media Player acts as a portable hard disk when hooked up to your computer. That means you can use it to carry any data file you want and also back up portions of your computer hard disk to prevent loss of important data.

6. Long Battery Life

Notebook batteries typically last about 100-120 minutes, which is barely enough time to watch a feature length movie. Personal Media Players come with batteries and power management system that enable long battery life: 4 or 5 hours with video and up to 10 hours for audio.



Before you go shopping for a product, here are some things to look for in a Portable Media Player:

Take a look at the LCD screen	For instance, the Archos Gmini 402 comes with a 2.2" LCD screen while the iRiver PMP 120 and the Creative Zen Vision, though bigger and heavier, both feature 3.5" screens.
Battery life	The idea of portable entertainment is that you can use it on the go where you won't have a convenient outlet for charging. Make sure the player you choose can deliver at least 4 hours of continuous video play time.
Take a look at the menu system of the player	If it seems hard to locate or rearrange files, then you are in for a lot of frustration because these players hold a lot of information. Try to find something that is intuitive to you. Some of the new Portable Media Centers are based on Windows Media Player software that uses symbols familiar from PCs.
Digital photographers, look for memory card slot or USB host connectivity	These features allow you to download pictures onto the personal media player and free up valuable memory space from the camera memory card for more shots.

Story by Jason Gordon

Life without a portable MP3 player



Introducing music phones

Today, having music on a phone is not only about ringtones, but full MP3 songs and FM radio. You can let real music flow to your ears through the headset, or to other people's ears through the phone's loudspeaker, but only if you have the right kind of phone.

Those phone owners who happen to have a smartphone powered by Palm OS, Symbian OS, or Windows Mobile operating system, can listen to full MP3 songs on their phones. The required software to play music is usually installed in the phone, or it can be downloaded from the manufacturer's web site, or purchased from, for example Handango.

If you don't own a smartphone, you have to read the phone's user guide or navigate the phone menu and look for entries on music. If you can't find anything related to music on your phone and you don't have a smartphone, the chances are, that you won't be able to add the capability afterwards.

And that's exactly why you should know what to look for when you are ready to get your first music phone. First, determine what form of music you want: ringtones, FM radio, MP3, or all of them.

Ringtones

It started with simple beeping ringtones that remotely resembled some familiar tunes, but were still lots of fun. Then, phones improved and began to feature better audio quality and could play recognizable melodies as polyphonic ringtones. MIDI tunes, for example, can be purchased or downloaded for free from the Internet. A limitation of MIDI and polyphonic music formats is that they are synthesized music and can't reproduce singing.

Fortunately, you are not limited to monotonic or polyphonic ringtones anymore, because MP3 technology allows you to have any music as your ringtone - if your phone recognizes MP3. You can purchase MP3 ringtones, or download them from your own computer for free. If you have extracted music from your CDs to listen to on the computer or on a portable MP3 player, you can use the same music on your music phone.

Our recommendation is to find a phone that can play MP3 ringtones. With MP3, your ringtone library can be as large as your CD collection. If an MP3 phone is out of your reach, get a phone that can play MIDI melodies, they are easily available on the Internet and if you know your notes, you can create your own MIDI as well.

FM radio

Listening to the radio on the phone is easy: plug in the headset and tune in to your favorite station. You need to use a piece of software on the phone to control the radio, and some headsets allow you to manage the radio as well. Radio is a convenient method for listening to music on the phone because you don't have to download new music and remove old songs from its memory.

FM radio on a phone is typically built of components: the headset cable doubles as an antenna, a software on the phone is used as the tuner, and the FM receiver chips are inside the phone. If there's no FM radio on the phone when it comes out of the factory, that's it then - you can forget about radio. It usually can't be added to the phone as an accessory.



We recommend finding a phone with radio and that shouldn't be too hard, most music phones come with an FM radio.

MP3 music on the phone



In principle, it is easy to turn a phone into an MP3 player by installing software into the unit that decodes MP3 music and plays it through the phone's loudspeakers or headset. But only in principle, because MP3 songs require megabytes of memory space and the player software needs more processing power from the hardware than many other software used on phones.

Phones that can play MP3 are often high-end, or mid-category phones because of memory and processing power requirements. We recommend a Palm OS, Symbian OS, or Windows Mobile smartphone for MP3 music. No matter what kind of phone you choose, make sure that it comes with a removable memory card. It is an essential tool for getting enough storage space for music and it's a good technique to use when you copy MP3 songs from your computer to the phone.

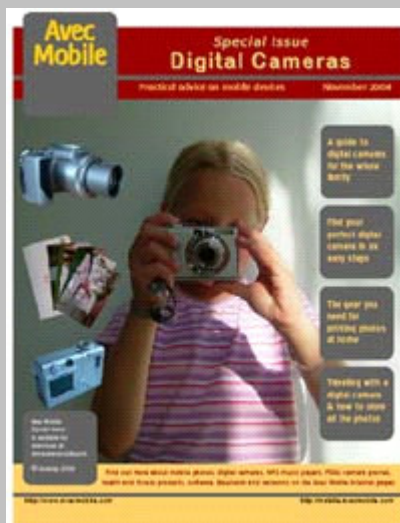
The best music phone you can get is a model that can play MP3 ringtones, can tune in to your favorite FM radio stations and has a removable memory card where you can copy the latest MP3 songs to listen to on the phone. Other features to look for are: a standard stereo connector for replacing the headphones included in the package and plenty of good MP3 music on your computer.

Check out phone reviews at:
reviews.avecmobile.com

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